Savin' me

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by dancey94

Summary

After Will's illness caused by working in law enforcement, Graham decided to work and live at a lighthouse. His peaceful life was disrupted when one summer day he spotted a pile of torn clothes on the beach. With a man underneath.

What else were you expecting?

Notes

Show me what it's like
To be the last one standing
And teach me wrong from right
And I'll show you what I can be
And say it for me
Say it to me
And I'll leave this life behind me
Say it if it's worth saving me

See the end of the work for more notes

The breeze ruffled Will's hair as he was standing at the top of the tower. His arms were supported on the rails and his eyes felt heavy. The humid air and the solitude was something Will Graham cherished in his work and would never let that go easily. People living in the town nearby didn't know Will and when he occasionally went there for shopping, some of the local merchants thought he was just a tourist. After a year though, Will gained himself a reputation of a loner and a freak. He lived in the lighthouse and rarely visited the town. He never showed up at parties and never attended Sunday masses.

One sunny Tuesday of July, Will was looking far at the horizon and relished the warmth on his face. It was never too hot as the breeze created the illusion of mild chill. The music was playing inside the lighthouse – an old vinyl record Will managed to get a hold of. He liked jazz and the feeling of the time stopping or even reversing. There was something about the modern technology that made Will dizzy and pale.

The piano tunes were reaching his ears while his eyes wandered around. He looked down, at the rocks and the patch of sand, where the tourists and local people used to come and make picnics. Will couldn't deny he liked watching young women sunbathe and play in the water. The fear of someone breaking into the lighthouse often annoyed Will and he really wasn't fond of the noises reverberating near his dwelling but that was the charm of Will's life. Nothing is perfect and even his seemingly perfect plan of living and working in the lighthouse had its faults.

As Will's eyes were covering the distance from west to south, Graham spotted something on the shore. The place was otherwise empty – no tourists, no fishermen, not even kids. Will's dogs were still soundly asleep when he was leaving the house and they were much smaller and more lively to barely lie on the ground.

The thin dark stain on the golden velvet made Will curious. He stepped inside the and grabbed a pair of binoculars lying on a small table. The thing looked like a pile of old dirty clothes, most likely thrown ashore during the night. Will hated when people left garbage on the beach or when the sea spat something. It often looked like a blemish on the otherwise most perfect element in Will's life.

As the sun reflected on something, the rays blinded Graham for a moment. He blinked a few times and then looked again at the pile below. "Oh my god…" Will murmured when the thing on the shore seemed to shift. Only then did Will noticed the ashen hair and the long legs belonging to the man spread on the sand. "Oh my god!"

Graham quickly plonked the binoculars on the table and surged down the spiral stairs until his head was spinning and he felt dizzy. He almost kicked the door open and hurried to the beach. After a moment he was joined by his dogs who must have woken up and noticed the movement. They ran along their master when one of the furry animals spotted the man lying on the ground and started sniffing him.

Will knelt by the figure and checked for any signs of consciousness. He felt a heartbeat under his hands when he was shifting the man's position. He was also breathing. Graham's help must have been registered by the man and he groaned gently.

“Can you hear me?” Will asked and the response was a soft hum. Graham started looking for any injuries or wounds but there were none. No broken bones or ribs. Probably some bruises under the thick dark clothes. “I’ll take you home. Can you walk?” Will lifted the man’s upper body and he groaned again. “Come on, you need to help me. I’m not sure I can drag you all the way to my house.”

The dogs were sniffing and licking the man until he finally opened his eyes. They were bloodshot and tired. The dogs seemed to find something on the man as they were persistent in their ministrations.

The man was about to speak but he only waved his hand and pressed his clothes tighter to his body. His mouth must have been dry and he must have been utterly exhausted. Will started wondering what he was doing here and how long he had been lying there.

The man rose with Graham’s help and leant against Will’s body as they stumbled to the small house next to the lighthouse. The interior was filled with warmth and sunlight coming through the many huge windows. The walls were faded green and blue. Will helped the man to the couch and when he sat down, Graham went to fetch a glass of water. Then, he would make something to eat but he needs to know the man’s name first.

The stranger took the glass from Will’s hands and the men’s fingers brushed. He gulped the water and looked at Will with gratitude. His wide amber eyes made him seem vulnerable and did not match the rest of the man’s figure. His clothes were torn and dark yet the man kept them very tightly pressed to his body.

“What is your name?” Graham asked and the other man only groaned. He looked at the empty glass and Will took that as a request for more water. He fetched a whole pitcher and placed it on the table in front of the couch. Graham sat in the armchair next to the table and observed his guest, who drank two more glasses before he wiped his mouth, sighed and put down the glass.

“My name is Hannibal.” The man stated simply and looked at the dogs playing in the house. When they heard the man’s voice, they turned to him and resumed sniffing him again. One particularly determined dog jumped on the couch and begin scratching Hannibal’s torn coat.

“Stop it! Get down!” Will told to the dog, seeing how uncomfortable it made the stranger. “Sorry about that. They are just excited because they only get to see me. Every day. They lack variety.”

Hannibal nodded and poured another glass of water. This time he didn’t drink it at once. He seemed to be contemplating something carefully. “Thank you.” The man said finally. Will smiled faintly, even though the man wasn’t looking at him and couldn’t see his ruby lips curving gently.

“I’m Will. Graham. I work in the lighthouse.” Will explained and Hannibal lifted his eyes to look at his saviour. The man’s eyes were conspicuous and pervading, even though significantly red and almost glassy.

“I see.” Hannibal muttered and sipped the water. Will looked through the window, at the sea in front of his house, before he spoke again.

“Why were you lying on the beach? In torn clothes.” The implication was there but Will left it hanging. Maybe the man was beaten, though he seemed pretty fine, all things considered. Graham has worked there for a few years now and he never rescued anyone. Not like this. There have been homeless people or hurt dogs but never anyone requiring immediate help.

“My boat wrecked against the rocks, I lost consciousness and the sea must have thrown me ashore.” Hannibal explained, a little too quickly for Will’s taste, as if the man was lying or there was something he was hiding. Then, he gulped the rest of the water and wiped his mouth. “Could I stay here for a day or two? I can sleep in the lighthouse.”

Will’s brows rose in silent surprise but then he dwelled for a moment on the idea. He could do with a little help for a day. He could take the dogs somewhere and go to the city. But then a pang of fear and irresponsibility struck Will when he realised he was willing to leave his workplace and the sailors at the mercy of a complete stranger.

“Wouldn’t you rather if I lent you money to go back home?”

Hannibal was silent. There was obviously something he wanted to remain hidden and something haunting him. Home was not a place he wanted to go or maybe a place he couldn’t go. There are strange ghosts waiting for people in the most familiar places. Will understood that. Probably better than anyone. His own past often tried to catch up with him but he wouldn’t let it. He had a new life now and he was building new walls around him.

“Alright.” Graham stated seriously as he stood up from the armchair. “I will let you stay here however long you wish.” Hannibal’s eyes narrowed as he was waiting for the catch. In agreements like that there is always a catch. “But you are not to disrupt my life in any way. You must realise I have duties.” Will continued, looking through the window at the lighthouse and the waves on the sea. “I eat and sleep at particular hours and I don’t like changes. I can write you my schedule and I want you to respect that for the time you are to spend here. Anything you want to do, I don’t care.” Will waved his hand, dismissing any secrets or issues the stranger might have had. “Do we have a deal?”

Hannibal was watching Will’s expression intently and then rose from the couch. He looked at the dogs on the floor and one corner of his lips lifted in a half-smile. “We have a deal.” The man said in a calm and hoarse voice and extended his hand to offer a handshake. Will shook the man’s hand and that was it.

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The first day was the most memorable. Will was awoken by the smell of a delicious breakfast and lack of dogs’ whining and barking. Hannibal had let out the animals and decided to cook something, to appear useful. The gesture was highly appreciated, of course, and even more after Will had his first taste of the man’s exquisite talent in culinary arts. Graham ate the breakfast quickly and rushed to the lighthouse to raise the flag. He turned on the generator and made sure everything is functional.
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Will's days used to pass mostly on reading and maintaining the lighthouse. Graham would run with the dogs, along the shore or just around the place. He often slept during the days because he was most important during the nights.

The first day Hannibal stayed at Will's house, Will couldn't sleep. He spent an hour at the top of the lighthouse, watching the sea – calm and steady. Graham wanted his life to be exactly like that. He used the binoculars to observe the dogs at the beach, playing with Hannibal. Will still didn't know the man's surname or occupation or anything really. The stranger was mysterious but somehow charming and it was difficult to say not to him. The dogs seemed to have fun, too, and Will smiled warmly. He descended the stairs and stepped inside his house to collapse on the bed. Sleep wasn't waiting for him and inviting him to close his eyes, but Will felt that he finally enjoyed simply lying on his soft sheets in the middle of the day. Unconsciously, his mind shut off and he fell asleep right there and then.

The afternoon glow of the sun descending from its pinnacle pervaded the house through the windows. It offered a gentle nudge towards Will's eyelids and then the dogs began their siege. They surrounded Graham on the bed and started sniffing and wiggling their tails happily. Will opened his eyes and was struck by the passage of time. He looked around but didn't find Hannibal. Instead, he smelt a miracle currently being cooked in his kitchen. Graham would keep Hannibal if only for the fantastic food he made.

Will entered the kitchen and took the seat by the table, watching his guest's back as the man worked by the cooker. The meal was soon served and Will could only hum in delight to express his enchantment. No words would ever describe the taste and smell and experience that was eating this delicious dinner. No words were needed as both Hannibal and Will remained silent all throughout the meal. Will promised not to invade the stranger's privacy and he was keeping that promise. Hannibal seemed to be respecting their deal as well.

In the evening Will moved to the lighthouse to carry out with his duties. Every fifteen seconds the flashing light was blinding Will but he got used to this over the years. There were not many things he would complain about in his job. The frequent fog horn noises could never bring Graham down and disturb him in any way. He stepped outside for a moment and spotted the lights were still on in his small house. Hannibal was not asleep. What was he doing? No. Will had to dismiss his inborn curiosity and take care of the lighthouse. There were people depending on him.

An hour later Will was listening to Marine Radio, when a local speaker announced that a wreck had been found on the shore, not far from Will's house, close to the nearest town actually. The speaker said the message was repeated all day and that the crew is sought. The coastguard are already looking for any people who might have been thrown ashore and later they will start searching for bodies. Will gasped as he realised Hannibal might have been a part of the crew. Trembling, Graham picked up the receiver and started picking the number but then he hesitated. There was no proof, no evidence that Will was right. For all he knew Hannibal might have been a homeless person or a fisherman whose boat was crushed by the rocks on the sea.

Graham sat all through the night listening to the radio attentively, and thinking about all possible scenarios. That was why Will applied for the post at the lighthouse in the first place.

His mind was often working too hard and eventually went mad, like an overheated machine. Will used to work in law enforcement but it quickly escalated to him falling ill and suffering from brain inflammation. He decided he'd had enough.

It stung when all his inner workings and devices started collaborating again and the awareness that it could act out against him was terrifying. Will glanced at the watch to check the time and sighed dispirited when it turned out to be a really long night since there were still a few hours he had to spend there, alone, at the mercy of his own imagination and fears.

Will opened the old unsolved cases he had been storing in his mind for years, and he walked once again down the path of the victims who had never been avenged and whose families had never got justice. The feeling of weakness and uselessness engulfed Graham's figure as he realised how many cases went unsolved. That was life. Not a crime show where the detective always finds the bad guy.

Finally, exhausted and on the verge of a mental breakdown, Will left the lighthouse at six in the morning. He headed to his house where he found Hannibal sleeping on the couch. The dogs were settled on the floor but the soft creek of the floor woke everyone up. Hannibal looked at Will with his hypnotic maroon eyes. They were darker now that the man was feeling better.

Will wasn't sure he'd find the strength and courage to talk to his guest but sleep was not an option at the moment. He sat in the chair and petted the dogs who gathered around him. The silence was easy to get used to and it might have been safer to simply let his suspicions go, but Will felt the urge to investigate; such was his fault as a former detective.

"Are you a fisherman?" Will's voice was weak, weaker than he would like it to be. That was no time for weakness.

Hannibal looked at Graham and blinked. He seemed to be ready to leave at any time. He had only his clothes on him and nothing else. He nodded and cleared his throat. Will glanced at the dogs and then remembered the announcement on the radio. It had been echoing in his head for the last few hours. Graham was about to ask all the burning questions but he knew better than that. He moved to the kitchen and opened the fridge.

"I'll go to the town, to buy some food. I also need to send a letter. Will you stay here and play with the dogs? I should be back in a few hours."

Hannibal narrowed his eyes but nodded. He was really quiet and Will was getting more and more suspicious. He hated being wrong but at that moment he would rather not be right. Will sat on the bicycle and hoped the dogs were safe with the man.

Graham did the shopping and sent a letter but it didn't take him long. He went to see the wreck they had found. There were a few people taking pictures but the attraction had already faded. Will moved around the crushed boat and searched for any clues as to what had happened.

The wreck was not as Will had imagined. It was merely a few planks bound together, or rather not anymore. The crash with the rocks completely destroyed the raft. It looked like a

makeshift boat, built by a not particularly skilled craftsman. Will spotted a place where the boat bent and a curve in one of the planks. The boat had been battered by a quite big sea animal.

“Excuse me, what are you looking for, sir?” A man dressed in a grey jumper asked Will and grabbed his arm to make him move away from the wreck. Will quickly took a step back to avoid the touch.

“I live in a lighthouse.” Graham explained and pointed at the high building in the distance. The coastguard nodded and withdrew his hand. “I heard the announcement and was wondering if you found the crew.”

“Not yet. No one called, no body was thrown ashore. We’re still waiting. But it seems like a shark might have taken care of the owner and the boat was left abandoned to get crushed against the rocks. You didn’t see anything?”

“No.” Will stated and examined the wreck once again. If this was Hannibal’s, why was the man so secretive? Why wasn’t he looking for his property and why didn’t he want to return home? Graham took the bicycle and vanished from the place. A few people recognised him and frowned at him. He never did anything wrong to those people, why were they so set against him?

Will arrived at his house in the early afternoon and found it empty. There was no sign of anyone else living there apart from Graham. Only the dogs welcomed the man and he sighed. Maybe that was for the best. He didn’t know Hannibal and he appeared to be involved with something dangerous, or at the very least mysterious, and Will wanted to stay as far away as possible from mysterious and hazardous.

The shopping having been unpacked, Will made himself ice tea and a sandwich. Then, he set an alarm clock and went to sleep.

The squeaky and annoying noise woke him when the alarm clock went off. Will punched the thing, took a newspaper and went to the lighthouse. He ascended the stairs lazily, while devouring an apple, and only after the last step did he notice a man sitting on the floor by the wall.

“Hannibal.” Will frowned and almost dropped the apple. He was expecting the man to be gone.

“Have you figured it out?” The stranger asked and Will blinked. “I saw your diploma. I know you were a detective.”

“I was.”

“It never stops, does it? The thinking, re-enacting, imagining.”

“Sounds like you have quite an experience with law enforcement.” Will said and sat by the table.

“I’m not a threat to you.” Hannibal stated, all the while remaining by the wall. Graham opened a cupboard and took out a bottle of whiskey. He had only one glass so he filled it full and left it on the table for Hannibal to take, if the man wanted to. Will gulped straight from the bottle.

“I haven’t figured it out. So why don’t you tell me?”

Hannibal looked at Will, his eyes were dark and face features very sharp. He seemed like a predator, a shadow dwelling in the darkest corners, waiting for the prey. But Will wasn’t afraid of him. He had dealt with much more darker people. Darkness was familiar to him, it was the mystery that he feared. It was the unknown that would haunt him.

“You want the whole story given on a silver plate?” Hannibal seemed disappointed and offended. “Don’t you like the thrill of unwrapping, as you gradually reveal the next pieces of the puzzle? Don’t you like the velvety feeling of satisfaction when finally all the pieces are fitting together and you can see the whole picture?”

Will snorted in amusement. He used to like that, yes. He used to feel almost orgasmic when the case was finally cracked, solved and closed. But he grew tired and ill and the job he was doing was taking a toll on him, so he quit and he decided everything was going to be easy from that point on.

“I saw the wreck.” Graham confessed as he sipped the whiskey. Hannibal didn’t flinch, he was probably expecting that. Suddenly, Will realised that Hannibal was most likely expecting him to figure out everything and call the coastguards or the police. He hid at the top of the lighthouse and waited. “Who are you? What did you do?”

“My name is Hannibal Lecter.” The man began and Will knew this was going to be a long night. “I’m a fisherman. A few days ago a man named Tobias and I took the boat and were supposed to cross the sea to get to another town.”

“On a boat like that? It was a wreck to begin with. The most poor of fishermen have better boats.” Will reasoned. Hannibal smiled gently at the smart observation. He wasn’t talking to a stupid and inexperienced man. Will knew boats and knew life.

“Let’s say we didn’t have time and money and we desperately needed to leave the place.”

“You were refugees? Prisoners?”

“I was a refugee. Tobias was…not.” The implications were left hanging but Will didn’t ask more. “Sadly, we did not reach our destination as in the middle of our way, a shark attacked us. We were fighting it but to no avail. We had no weapons and too little strength. The shark bit off Tobias’s arm and when I wanted to stop it, I pulled out its tooth.” Hannibal reached inside his torn clothes and revealed a long sharp white tooth. That was what the dogs smelt on Lecter. “The shark knocked me out and took Tobias. Then I must have crashed against the rocks and fortunately, you found me.”

“If you seek refuge, why didn’t you borrow some money and flee?”

“I am a wanted man, Will. I would need to be smuggled to start a new life someplace else.”

“I don’t have a car. I can’t take you anywhere.”

“I’m not asking you to.”

“So, do you want to stay here forever?”

Hannibal tilted his head and bore his eyes into Will. The mystery built around him faded but the walls were still there. “We could share responsibilities.” Lecter proposed and Will considered the vision for a moment. That could work. Will got used to living alone and talking mostly to his dogs but Hannibal was not a very talkative man it seemed. As long as he wouldn’t disrupt Will’s life, Hannibal could stay. He could cook his delicious meals and play with the dogs when Graham would go to town.

Will glanced at the sea and the setting sun on the horizon. He liked his life there, peaceful and quiet, filled with idle days and busy nights, no longer full of haunting nightmares. Graham sometimes wished to go back to law enforcement but the memories flooded him and warned against returning to being a detective.

“I hate to be sexist but your place will be in the kitchen.” Will said with a smile and the words made Hannibal chuckle, too.

That night they spent mostly silent, listening to the radio and watching the calm sea.

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Three months later

The chilly air on his face woke up Will and he groaned. For the last three months he’d been awoken by the smell of delicious breakfasts of dinners and now the only scent was the one of the dogs. Graham frowned and pulled higher the covers. Octobers tended to be a dramatic change in weather. Used to sun and pleasant warmth Will had to reconcile with the fact that colder times were ahead. He looked around and didn’t find any sing of Hannibal. The man was a mystery still after the few months he spent in Will’s house. He spoke very little but with time smiled more and seemed to have grown fond of Will, even if they didn’t share many facts about themselves. They communicated wordlessly.

Graham looked up through the window and spotted the flag on the top of the lighthouse. He dressed up and made tea. Carefully, he took the two cups and ascended the spiral stairs. “Good morning.”

Hannibal took the cup, brushing gently his fingers against Will’s, and sat down. Graham sat next to him and blew at the hot tea. They were watching the sun and the sea, creating images in their heads and making impossible plans. Will was happy, happier than even before. He could remain silent and yet he had company of another person.

Lecter turned to look at Will, his eyes amber and reflecting the sunlight. The man was admiring the other’s features and the pleased, relaxed expression on his face. The future was
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only a distant concept and the day was only just beginning. There were too many beautiful things awaiting for them to worry about tomorrow.

Will felt a hand gently stroking his own and turned to look straight into Hannibal's eyes. The two men smiled at each other and then Will stood up and turned on the radio. He sipped the tea and put down the cup. The sun was trying to fight the clouds to get to Will's face as he stepped outside on the balcony. Soon, Hannibal joined him, and they greeted the new day together.

End Notes

sorry for mistakes, sorry for vagueness and sorry for everything xD
ALSO - "...and then they kissed." ^^

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